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**GOOD LUCK TO ALL SKIJORING RACERS!**



# Always looking to evolve

## ***Saratoga Skijoring to unveil new track for its 6th year***

**by Joshua Wood**

Hooves and skis are set to land in Saratoga this weekend as the 6th Annual Saratoga Skijoring Races will take place February 5 and 6 out at Buck Springs Arena.

While skijoring has become more popular in western states such as Wyoming, Colorado and Montana it has Norwegian roots. Derived from the word “ski driving”, skijoring often used dogs to pull a skier. Once it arrived in the West, the dog was ditched in place of a horse and rider. Throw in an obstacle course built out of snow and now you have something to do during the long winter months.

Since it was introduced in Saratoga, both the Lions Club and the Saratoga Skijoring Committee have worked to keep things interesting for racers and spectators alike. This year, that comes in the form of a new course. In the past, the horse and rider would race down a dirt track while the skier would trail behind going through the snowy obstacle course.

“The biggest change that I think the spectators are going to see is, historically, we’ve always run on a dirt track offset to the right and we’re doing a crossover track this year. So, the horses are going to be running snow and the skiers will go both to the right and the left of the horse in navigating the gates,” said Will Faust, one of the event organizers and competitors. “We think, one, it makes it a little more entertaining to watch. Two, as a

competitor, I think it’s more fun on the skier side. It changes the complexities of the course and we’re able to, from a spectating standpoint, put jumps on the left side of the horse which doesn’t block the view of the crowd.”

Faust, along with other

to make sure it’s safe for the horses,” Faust said. “It’s been our experience it might even be safer for the horses to run on a little bit of snow.”

Considering snow is a requirement for skijoring to even take place, the limited

fence out at the track, some of it permanent. Yes, we’re going to have to haul. Richard’s got that (handled) with the help of a lot of our great, local businesses and the Town of Saratoga,” said Faust. “We’ve got piles all around town.”

England American Legion Post 54 and the American Legion Auxiliary handled the fare.

“(We’re) bringing in a couple other food vendors this year, so that’s something that’s a little different,” said Faust. “A lot of those proceeds are going to go towards Tyler Pickett Park (Never Forget Park) and supporting the (American) Legion and Auxiliary there.”

Never Forget Park in Memory of Staff Sergeant Tyler Pickett is a long-planned project which finally looks like it may become reality beginning this summer. Pickett, a Saratoga High School graduate, was killed in combat in Iraq in June 2008.

Joining the American Legion and Legion Auxiliary this year will be Mag’s Mobile Kitchen and Snowy Mountain Brewery. The intent is to get more local food and beverage trucks out to Saratoga Skijoring next year, essentially adding a food truck festival to the skijoring event.

“We’re always looking to evolve,” Faust said.

As of right now, the weather looks like it will cooperate, though the wind is always an issue in Wyoming. Saratoga Skijoring may have solved that problem, this year, though.

“We’ve sourced the strongest rare earth magnets money can buy to put on the ring stands to hold the rings up,” said Faust.

Races will begin at 10 a.m. on February 5 and February 6. Registration will take place from 5 to 7 p.m. on February 4 at the Historic Hotel Wolf with a calcutta to follow at 7:30 p.m.

For more information and race rules, visit [www.saratogaskijoring.com](http://www.saratogaskijoring.com).



*Saratoga Sun file photo*

***The unique but entertaining combination of skiers and horses will return to Buck Springs Arena this weekend. This year marks the 6th year for the Saratoga Skijoring Races.***

Saratoga Skijorers, spends his winter going to other races throughout the west. In their travels, they’ve seen other variations on the winter sport.

“Richard Raymer, who builds our track, as we’ve traveled around to different races, has helped other events build their tracks. These are the tracks we race on, pretty much, everywhere and he knows exactly how

amount of snow on the ground at the moment may have some wondering if there’s enough to hold the event. According to Faust, not only is there enough snow, but it’s the 2nd best year Saratoga Skijoring has had in terms of snow.

“Something the Lions Club and the Skijoring Committee did back around Thanksgiving is we put up about 1,000 feet of snow

Another change this year, other than the track, is the addition of more food and beverage vendors out at the track. In other places, the skijoring races are held in town which allows spectators to enjoy the event and patronize the local businesses. With Saratoga’s skijoring races taking place outside Saratoga, the food and drinks will be brought to the action. In year’s past, Angus

**SARATOGA SKIJORING INFO CAN BE FOUND AT  
WWW.SARATOGASKIJORING.COM**

**GOOD LUCK TO ALL SKIJORING RACERS!**